As per Census 2001, the Annual Exponential Growth Rate has declined from 2.14% in 1991 to 1.93% in 2001.

Upgradation of Harpalpur Station

914. SHRI BALAVANT *ALIAS* BALAPTE:
SHRI SHREEGOPAL VYAS:

Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether his Ministry has any proposal to upgrade the Harpalpur station in Madhya Pradesh;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) the time by which the work on this project is likely to be started and completed; and

(d) the estimated cost of the said project?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) to (d) Harpalpur is a 'D' category station and all passenger amenities as per norms have already been provided at this station. However, upgradation of passenger amenities at stations is a continuous process and is undertaken through Annual Works Programme. For improvement of passenger amenities at this station, work of extension of high level platform has already been completed. Further, following works have been sanctioned and are planned for completion by 31st March, 2009:

(i) Provision of Unreserved Ticketing System, and

(ii) Unreserved Ticketing System cum Passenger Reservation System.

Tatkal Ticket System

915. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of tatkal tickets available in each category of train, percentage-wise and class-wise;

(b) whether it is a fact that the normal tickets are now available as tatkal tickets only;

(c) whether this is only an income generating method to the Railways because there is no refund on cancellation and the passenger is forced to pay the full fare irrespective of his destination;

(d) the justification for exploiting the compelling situation of the passengers by this scheme; and

(e) whether any policy regarding the number of seats available under the tatkal scheme would not cross a definite percentage of the total general pool tickets is in practice and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Tatkal scheme is available in all Mail/Express trains and in all reserved classes except First Class and AC First Class. The extent of accommodation earmarked in various trains under Tatkal scheme varies from 10% to 30% of the accommodation depending upon the average utilisation.

(b) No, Sir.

(c) and (d) No, Sir. This facility has been provided to accommodate those passengers who have to travel at short notice. A flat refund of 25% of total fare charged on the ticket, excluding Tatkal charges is granted on cancellation of confirmed Tatkal tickets, which are presented for cancellation upto 24 hours before the schedule departure of the train.

The booking under Tatkal scheme is normally done from originating to terminating point of the train with boarding facility from intermediate station. However, zonal railways have been authorised to earmark Tatkal quota at some intermediate stations also keeping in view the traffic pattern and utilisation of end-to-end Tatkal quota. In such cases, the passengers travelling from originating station to any station short of such intermediate station will pay fare upto that intermediate station and not upto terminating station of the train.

(e) The extent of accommodation to be earmarked under Tatkal scheme in different classes has been specified as mentioned in reply to part (a).

Advance booking period

916. SHRI KAMAL AKHTAR: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the advance booking period has been extended to 90 days in the trains;

(b) if so, how much income railways has received during the period till date since its inception;

(c) whether this is exploitation of passengers rather than to help them because the chances for cancellation of tickets is more in this compared to the short booking periods;

(d) whether this act of the Railways is an exploitation of the passengers in two ways holding the money without giving any interest for three months and imposing huge penalty of Rs. 40 and 60 for sleeper and 3 AC coaches respectively per person on cancellation; and

(e) if so, the justification thereto?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Advance Reservation Period (ARP) has been enhanced from 60 to 90 days (excluding the date of journey) w.e.f. 01/02/2008.

(b) During the period from 01-02-2008 till 20-02-2008, earnings from sale of reserved tickets through computerised Passenger Reservation System (PRS) has been approximately Rs. 752.59 crores.

(c) to (e) No, Sir. This is to facilitate passengers to plan their journey well in advance.

Removal of AC coaches from Bareilly-Mughalsarai express

†917. SHRI VEER PAL SINGH YADAV: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) the reasons due to which two AC coaches have been removed from Bareilly-Mughalsarai (4308) express;

(b) whether there is any proposal for making this train an express train between Lucknow-Mughalsarai;

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.